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The Library Neighborhood Center is an experimental demonstration project designed to explore new ways of bringing books and their contents to bear upon individual and community needs. It is operated by the City of New Haven through its Free Public Library and was created in July, 1964 by moving the Scranton branch to rented store front space on Chapel Street. The area served by the Center includes 18,000 to 20,000 persons of varied cultural and ethnic backgrounds. This report describes activities and programs, collections, facilities, and staffing of the Center in its first year. Planning in conjunction with other community organizations is discussed. Among the conclusions about the projects' first year are that (1) the Center can be a change-agent in the community, (2) it would be more effective to plan fewer programs, (3) responsibilities for programs must be clearly allocated, (4) more staff orientation sessions and materials are necessary, (5) some limits on behavior in the Center are necessary, (6) acceptance of the Center by the community has been slow and continued efforts must be made to become part of the life there, and (7) well designed evaluative techniques are necessary. (Author/CC)

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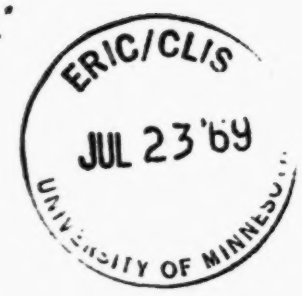

NEW HAVEN FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

First Annual Report of the

LIBRARY NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

July 14, 1964 - June 30, 1965

I. INTRODUCTION

The Library Neighborhood Center is an experimental, demonstration project designed to explore and test new ways of bringing books and their contents to bear upon individual and community needs. It is operated by the City of New Haven through its Free Public Library. The Center was created July 14, 1964 by moving the 40-year-old Scranton branch from its quarters in the basement of the Scranton School to rented store-front space at 1580 Chapel Street, about 8 blocks northwest.

The location was based upon the recommendation made in the 1964 Study "Library Service in New Haven" prepared as part of the New Haven Community Renewal Program, by Dr. Emerson Greenaway, Director of the Free Library of Philadelphia, acting as consultant to the City of New Haven. The recommendation was that "the Scranton branch . . . should be re-located in the general vicinity of the Chapel-Derby intersection in rented quarters, and should be developed into a different kind of agency than the typical branch." (p.22) The location of the Library Neighborhoc Center is two blocks west of the Chapel-Derby intersection.

The area served by the Center contains an estimated 18,000-20,000 persons including those in planning areas 8 and 12, plus some residing in planning areas 7, 2, and 17.

Fifty percent of the three-year cost comes from an allocation of $90,000 made by Community Progress, Inc., from a Ford Foundation grant. The balance of $90,000 is made up by the City, from funds previously allocated for the operation of the Scranton branch, plus an additional $40,000 phased over the 3-year period.

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The C.P.I. allocation is relatively greater during the first two years, while the City's share increases in the second and third years, as shown in the following table:

	½ year 1964	1965	1966	½ year 1967
Scranton branch budget	$ 8,250	$16,500	$16,500	$ 8,250
Added City allocation	-	8,000	20,000	12,000
C.P.I. Allocation	32,500	31,000	19,000	7,500
Total	$40,750	$55,500	$55,500	$27,750

Mrs. Ruth N. Myers, co-ordinator of adult services for the library, served as the initial director for the Center and she was closely assisted by Mrs. Eva G. Williams, who was on leave from her assignment as librarian of the John Davenport Branch Library.

In May 1964, the number of books borrowed from the Scranton branch had dropped to 1,021. This was the lowest in any branch of the system and probably in the history of an agency which had at one time lent more than 100,000 books a year.

In August 1964, after the first full month of service at 1580 Chapel Street the book use was 4,638, an increase of 400%. The branch moved from number 7 to number 2, in number of books lent. The use of adult books increased from 282 in May to 2,067 in August; the total number of books lent in October was 5,492; in November 5,181; in March it was 5,742. For the 11½ months (the branch opened July 14) book use was 22,142 adult books lent; 34,483 children's books lent; total 56,625 books or an average of 4,924 a month.

In addition to persons who had already taken out borrowers' cards at the former Scranton branch, or at some other library agency, a total of 1,768 persons registered for library cards at the Center during the year. This included 879 adults and 843 children.

II ACTIVITIES

One of the major factors in the increased community impact was the varied and imaginative activity program. The plan for the first year of the demonstration called for experimentation and innovation, and this plan was carried out, while at the same time the standard, time-tested library service techniques were augmented and intensified.

From the opening day, varied programs and activities were offered. The 1964 summer calendar listed:

Story hour, every Monday

Tutorial reading, four mornings a week

Word games, two mornings a week

Creative dance and folk singing classes, two afternoons a week

Reading contest, two afternoons a week

Fun with music club, once a week

Learn to speak French, once a week

Human Relations club, every Friday evening

Coffee hour and book chat, once a week

There was at least one activity every day and there was something for every age group.

During the year thirty-nine different kinds of continuing group activities were regularly scheduled and carried on in the Center for meetings ranging from one each to 28, with attendance from 5 to 702.

The total number of meetings held was 762 and the total participation: 13,424. About 20 persons participated in each activity meeting, on the average.

A list of the activities carried on:

	No. of Meetings	Participation
Class Visits	215	6,322
Art Club	60	1,503
Puppet Club	35	834
Pre-School Story Hours	32	564
French Club	35	403
Story Hours	41	358
Fun With Music	11	279
Teen Council	26	271
Reading Contest	Continuous	264
Science Club	31	219
Word Games	31	215
Exploring in Books	13	183
Women's Dramatic Reading	16	170
Tutorial Reading	23	169
Mothers' Discussion Group	14	158
Choral Singing & Informal Music	12	158
Activities for Tots	21	140
Theatre in Library	12	140
Los Amigos	18	135
Art Classes (adult)	21	126
Adult Regular Film Series	8	120
Fun With Spanish (children)	9	65
Guitar Lessons (children)	3	65
Teen-Drama Group	7	63
Teen Public-Private School Girls Group	4	60
Chess	10	58
Adult Literacy	13	43
Retarded Children's Group	9	43
Creative Dance	4	42
Halloween Mask Contest	Continuous	40
Youngsters Knitting Group	4	38
Sewing Hints & Helps	7	35
Spelling Bee	3	35
Babysitting Workshop	3	29
Long Wharf Theatre Group	4	28
Coffee Hour Talks	5	24
Autumn Leaf Contest	continuous	10
Kensington Street Group	1	10
Human Relations	1	5

Some of the activities were carried on by volunteers; some by staff members; and some by a combination of both. Staff members included both those engaged by the Library and those assigned to the agency under various work programs sponsored by Community Progress, Inc.

Story hours, reading contests, and class visits, tested library service techniques for enhancing book interest, were successfully carried on, but the other activities were innovations, worked out by staff members of the Center. "Exploring with Books," "Fun with Music," "Science Club," "French Club," "Word Games," are examples of these departures from traditional library programming. These have a strong emphasis on individual participation and are flexible, responding to individual and group needs.

III PROGRAMS

Also, a series of programs was carried on. There were eight art show openings, at which the total attendance was 375. Five puppet shows for children were held, with total attendance of 555. Altogether, there were 46 types of programs, with a total of 70 meetings and attendance of 3,398 or an average attendance of 46 per meeting. In summary, a total of 16,822 persons took part in the activities and programs of the Center during the first 11½ months of its existence.

Programs were produced and presented by Center staff, or in conjunction with other organizations. Some were produced one time only; others were in series of two or more on regular weekly or monthly schedules.

The program list follows:

	No. of Meetings	Participation
Puppet Shows	5	555
Art Opening	8	375
Dramatic Presentation for Children	3	350
Gospel Sings	5	298
Hootenanys	5	229
Travelogues	4	210
Concerts (classical)	4	180
Films	3	120
Children's Art Demonstration	1	100
Scranton School Graduation	1	98
Adult Literacy Program Visit	1	90
Theatre Club Presentations	2	75
Fashion Show	1	75
League of Women Voters	1	75
Luncheon for Social Agency Executives & Board Members	1	60
Neighborhood Music School Concert	1	60
Children's Concert	1	45
Peace Corps Program	1	45
Congressman Speaks	1	42
Talk on Peru-Girl Friendlies	1	35
Medicare Discussion	1	33
New Haven Authors' Night	1	30
What is CPI	1	30
UNICEF Collection	1	25
Jazz Concerts	1	21
Mystery Writer	1	20
Print Making	1	15
Scranton PTA Meeting	1	15
Printing Demonstration	1	15
Civil Rights Program	1	12
Tips for Teens	1	12
Consumer Protection	1	10
Mrs. Hamilton's Reading Group	1	8
Senior Citizens -"Eat for Good Health"	1	8
Negro History Week	2	7
Social Security Program	1	7
Plans & Plants for City Gardens	1	6
Voter Registration Program	1	5
Know Your Schools	1	2

As can be seen, those for children had the greatest attendance. Some of the others, such as the Gospel Sings or the Congressman Speaks program, perhaps conveyed a new idea of the library center as a place where different kinds of things were happening.

IV BOOKS, ART, MUSIC

The Center opened with 10,533 volumes moved over from a small branch. During the year an additional 3,326 volumes were added, including 1,837 children's books and 1,489 volumes for adults.

Several areas were designated for development during the year: the fiction collection, using "Good Reading" as a guide; materials pertaining to Negro history, society and background; adult literacy materials purchased from bibliographies prepared by the New Haven Adult Literacy Program.

The Vertical File was discontinued because too expensive in terms of staff time to maintain an adequate collection.

Subscriptions to several periodicals new to the New Haven Library: "Afro-American," "Pittsburg Courier," "Chicago Defender," "Negro Digest." The collection is intended to be small, pertinent, and widely used, and based on the needs of the community. Adult literacy is one important aspect of the program, especially since literacy classes meet in the library. Materials bought: Reader's Digest literacy materials; Lauerback Foundation newspapers; materials from Adult Literacy Bibliographies.

A co-operative paperback collection was begun in an effort to stimulate teen-age reading. Paperbacks were donated by library patrons and were maintained in an uncataloged collection. The size of the collection grew to several hundred titles and was widely used. Titles were purchased from a high school reading list. A small collection of books in Yiddish was donated by local patrons who used the library regularly and wanted such materials available. The juvenile collection was strengthened one subject area at a time.

In addition to the planned response to discovered needs, a librarian was assigned to work systematically on the strengthening of the adult collection beginning with fiction, and using standard selection tools. History, biography

and art, music and recreation have been strengthened and all areas will be dealt with.

In addition to the periodic concerts of live music, the Center's facilities include a small, carefully selected group of classical and light classical records and a record-player, with both loud speaker and earphones. Private listening is available during all hours, to all users of whatever age.

The interior walls of the Center are painted off-white. About 200 linear feet of wall space is fitted for hanging framed works. Month-long exhibits of original work by New Haven area artists have been displayed in the Center, every month of the year but one, and that month there was an exhibit of photographs collected by a New Haven man, portraying achievements of prominent Negroes.

There were ten exhibits during the year, at which 83 artists were represented with original work or prints. Three hundred fifty paintings or works of art were displayed.

Art exhibits became more of an instrument of communication, stimulation and education than mere decoration. Staff worked with children around the children's responses to the art, in individual and group discussion.

V RELATIONS WITH COMMUNITY AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

An integral part of the planning concept for the Center was that it should in all its operations and activities be responsive to individual and community needs. These should be the real, felt needs as expressed by the people for whom the Center was planned. Accordingly, the assistant director was a qualified graduate in social work, specializing in community organization, with neighborhood experience both in New York and in New Haven. Her job was to discover and interpret the individual and community needs, and to relate programs and activities to these needs.

Planning for the Center was carried out with the active advice and co-operation of a Neighborhood Advisory Council, composed of local residents and professionals from other organizations. To an extent unusual for a library, there has been a concentrated effort on meeting with neighborhood and agency leaders to get their ideas about neighborhood needs. Among the groups with which contacts were made: neighborhood services of Community Progress, Inc., Visiting Nurse Association, community and elementary schools, Parent Teacher Associations, Senior Citizen Centers, Adult Literacy Office, Higher Horizons program of the schools, C.O.R.E., Wider City Parish, local churches and synagogues, and the Redevelopment Office.

VI STAFF

The staff allocation for the project called for six full-time persons, and three student aides, (high school students working part-time). As recruiting developed it became expeditious to fill two of the full-time positions with several experienced, qualified persons working from 9 to 20 or 25 hours a week. This arrangement provided a width of experience and training, particularly in programs and activities, and a schedule coverage that would not have been possible with all full-time persons.

In addition to salaried employees, there was a number of staff persons coming in under various C.P.I. programs including work-crew, high-school work study, and summer (college) interne. Also a number of volunteers were involved in certain specific programs. At one point during the year, there were 26 different persons engaged directly in the work of the Center in one way or another, on a continuing basis.

Mrs. Myers was in charge of the Center, assisted by Mrs. Williams, during the setting-up and establishment phase. Denis Lorenz was transferred from the

Reference Department of the Main Library in September and served as Director until February, when he came back to the Main Library to co-ordinate book selection and acquisition for the expanded collection of the Mitchell Branch. Mrs. Carol Schreiber, who had been assistant director since September, agreed to serve as acting director until mid-summer.

VII EVALUATION AND COMMENT

The Center has been, even before its first year was over, the subject of national attention. A plan based on the Center as the prototype has been prepared in the Office of Economic Opportunity for possible nationwide application. The acting director described the program to an audience of 1,200 librarians at the national conference of the American Library Association in Detroit in July. Visitors have come from Cleveland, Baltimore, two cities in New Jersey, New York City,and other cities. Inquiries have come from Texas, California, and other states, for information. The City Librarian has been appointed to two committees of the American Library Association, dealing with library services to functionally illiterates, and library participation in the national economic opportunity program.

Locally, the impact of the Center can be measured by the number of persons who participated directly or indirectly in the programs and activities, as described earlier in this report. These figures do not include daily attendance for browsing or reading, for which no records have been kept. The Center also provided an opportunity for experimenting with new and different kinds of group and individual library service. Most of these were developed by Center staff. These innovations in turn suggested to the community a role for the library as a change-agent; as a place where individuals might come together and explore opportunities and where other helping agencies might co-operate in providing opportunities.

As a result of a very active year in which a great many kinds of activity were tried out and in which there were no guide-lines or established procedures, several significant lessons were learned for practical application. These are summarized by Mrs. Carol Schreiber, assistant director, who also served as acting director from February to August.

VIII LESSONS LEARNED IN LNC'S FIRST YEAR

After extending program beyond the capacities of supervisory staff (although there was enough program staff to man each group), it has become clear that it is more effective to plan a smaller number of programs, (both everyday and special events) and to allocate responsibilities for program very clearly.

In assigning program responsibilities, a staff person should be assigned to work with each program volunteer, as liaison worker. This should cover publicity, supply and recruitment needs more effectively.

When planning program in co-operation with other agencies, lines of responsibility for all phases of program (publicity, audience, e.g.) must be clear-cut and agreed-upon by both agency and library.

With staff turnover and changes in volunteer and C.P.I. paid workers, it is necessary to hold orientation sessions and provide orientation materials more frequently. It is also necessary to continually re-inforce the real nature of LNC's function and to train staff to think in both library and group work terms.

Children's programs which have been most effective (in maintaining the interest of a heterogeneous group of children) on a regular basis, are those such as puppet club and art club, which focus on manual activities.

In using the library on an everyday, "drop-in" basis, it is necessary to establish clear-cut limits on behavior expected of children and adolescents.

Although the limits on behavior are more relaxed than those of a more traditional library, it is imperative that these limits be enforced, and by the entire staff.

In "reaching out" to groups and individuals who are not accustomed to using the library both individual and group personal contacts are important. The individual approach is most effective when time is taken to explore the individuals' interests and library resources can be introduced when relevant. The group approach (especially the small group approach) is effective when individuals have the chance to stimulate each other and work together now or as defining the groups needs. The worker can assist in the exploration and then contribute with ways in which the library can meet these needs.

It has been learned that we are not close enough geographically to the Scranton area to become part of the life there. A special effort must be made continually, to familiarize the neighborhood with library staff, and, on the other hand, the library staff with the neighborhood.

The acceptance of LNC as a unique and more active library resource by other agencies has been slow. Efforts must be made constantly to project an "aggressive" image, to convey an interest and involvement in local community affairs. At the end of the first year, this effort seems to have had impact, for the library is brought in more often into planning discussions.

The need for well-designed evaluative techniques has become clearer. Now that more thought and careful planning is going into program, as much (or more) thought should go into evaluation.

IX RECORDS OF USE

	BOOKS BORROWED			BORROWERS REGISTERED		
	Adult	Juvenile	Total	Adult	Juvenile	Total
July	888	2,064	2,952	63	77	140
August	2,067	2,571	4,638	124	60	184
September	1,960	3,031	4,991	68	65	133
October	1,939	3,553	5,492	116	108	224
November	2,037	3,144	5,181	85	99	184
December	1,812	2,603	4,415	40	36	76
January	1,805	2,828	4,633	65	36	101
February	2,032	2,979	5,011	81	28	109
March	2,298	3,444	5,742	68	53	121
April	1,807	2,997	4,804	27	46	73
May	1,659	2,601	4,260	37	42	79
June	1,838	2,488	4,326	36	38	74
	22,142	34,303	56,445	810	688	1,498

X SUMMARY OF COMMITMENTS AND EXPENDITURES

A.	Current Operating Costs		
	Personal Services	$27,374.55	
	Supplies	62.33	
	Rental	9,100.00	
	Utilities	1,103.98	
	Heat	1,037.68	
	Books, periodicals, etc.	8,458.83	
	Custodial	3,650.00	
	Miscellaneous	1,410.29	
	Sub Total		$52,197.66
B.	Establishment (non-recurring costs)		
	Architectural Fees	$ 820.00	
	Equipment	9,754.02	
	Renovation & Decoration	5,752.82	
	Sub Total		16,326.84
	Total		$68,524.50